

The first nucleus of the developing life is found in the libidinal wishes belonging to the oral zone, which dominate the child's activity in the beginning. In his earliest days the infant *is* a suckling, and his relation with the outer world in the person of his mother is dominated by this need to suck. His love life, no less than his nutritional need, is expressed in this relation to the mother's breast. After the first two or three months, however, his oral attitude begins to change, as the biting impulses develop. This new phase may precede the actual onset of teething, with a biting action of jaw and throat and gums, but it becomes more acute as the teeth begin to pierce the gum.

The oral zone dominates the child's feelings and activities even in the third quarter of his first year, when he is characteristically a grasper and will reach out to touch anything that comes within his range of vision. He grasps primarily to satisfy his mouth impulses, everything he can lay hold of being put into his mouth and sucked or bitten. The relative dominance of this zone lasts, indeed, well beyond this first year, and even to the time when the child can move about in the world, when the development of musculature and nervous co-ordinations has brought the ability to walk, and some skill with fingers and limbs. The extent to which his oral desires and their satisfaction or frustration affect his emotional life is seen in the very marked response of the infant to the weaning situation, and the extent to which problems of feeding occupy the attention of the nursery even during the following years.

Well before the zenith of the oral period, however, a second part of the body begins to assume significance in the mental life of the child, viz. the sensitive membrane of the lower

part of the rectum and anus, and the experiences connected with the relaxation and contraction of the muscles there. The anal zone probably comes into the mental field at the time when the rectal muscles gain a certain amount of tonicity, and the faeces some degree of solidity, and there is thus a greater active tension in the process of evacuation. The anal phase has two sub-phases, the earlier being that in which the optimal pleasure is obtained from expulsion of the faeces, and the later, in which it is gained from retaining, moulding and mastering the faeces.

Very presently the genital regions also begin to assume